

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KARACH 00672 160721Z

46

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TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, PK, RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN PRESIDENT VISITS KARACHI

SUMMARY: ROMANIAN PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S MARCH 13-14 OFFICIAL VISIT TO KARACHI AFFORDED HIM AND PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AN OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE AREAS OF AGREEMENT ON POLITICAL ISSUES AND REVIEW PROGRESS OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION. JOINT COMMUNIQUE AVOIDED CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. BHUTTO USED DINNER TOASTS AS VEHICLE FOR COMMENT ON RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN, AND ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL AID AND TRADE FACES SEVERAL OBSTACLES. VISIT HIGHLIGHTED SIMILARITIES IN ROMANIAN AND PAKISTANI POLITICAL APPROACHES TO LARGER POWERS. END SUMMARY.

1. ROMANIAN PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU, ACCOMPANIED BY MADAME CEAUSESCU

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PAGE 02 KARACH 00672 160721Z

AND A DELEGATION INCLUDING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GHEORGHE OPREA,

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS GEORGE MACOVESCU, AND DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MIHAIL PACEPA, PAID 18-HOUR OFFICIAL VISIT TO KARACHI MARCH 13-14. CEAUSESCU HAD PREVIOUSLY COME TO PAKISTAN IN JANUARY 1973; BHUTTO'S PLANNED RETURN VISIT TO BUCHAREST IN FEBRUARY 1974 (EN ROUTE FROM WASHINGTON) HAD BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO ASSASSINATION OF LEADING PESHAWAR POLITICIAN SHERPAO. CEAUSESCU RECEIVED WARM, IF A BIT RUSHED, STATE VISITOR TREATMENT -- AIRPORT SALUTES, HEAVILY-GUARDED MOTORCADE DOWN FLAG-DRAPED CEREMONIAL ROUTE, QUICK STOP AT JINNAH'S TOMB, THEN TWO HOURS OF TALKS, FOLLOWED BY OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY BHUTTO. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED OR INFLUENCED KARACHI PAPERS GAVE CEAUSESCU FAIRLY HEAVY COVERAGE, CARRIED EDITORIALS PRAISING BILATERAL COOPERATION, AND RAN SUPPLEMENTS ON SAME THEME (LARGELY PAID FOR BY ADVERTISEMENTS FROM LOCAL COMPANIES TRADING WITH ROMANIA).

2. AT BILATERAL TALKS, BHUTTB WAS ASSISTED BY FINANCE MINISTER MOHAMMED HANIF, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AZIZ AHMED, AND FINANCE AND FOREIGN SECRETARIES. ACCORDING TO BLAND MARCH 14 JOINT COMMUNIQUE (BEING POUCED TO ADDRESSEES), TALKS WERE HELD IN ATMOSPHERE OF "WARM FRIENDSHIP, CORDIALITY, AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING"; PRINCIPALS EXPRESSED "FULL SATISFACTION" WITH DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTANI-ROMANIAN RELATIONS AND SAW "LARGE POSSIBILITIES" FOR EXPANDED ECONOMIC COOPERATION. COMMUNIQUE EXPRESSED FIRM SUPPORT FOR POOR COUNTRIES' STRUGGLE AGAINST "INEQUITABLE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER." AFTER BOW TO UN CHARTER PRINCIPLES ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, COMMUNIQUE UNDERLINED IMPORTANCE OF "SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE COUNTRIES" IN ACHIEVING BETTER WORLD. COMMUNIQUE APPLAUSED CSCE AND ROMANIA'S ROLE THEREIN; PROGRESS ACHIEVED TOWARD SOUTH ASIA NORMALIZATION AND PAKISTAN'S CONTRIBUTION THERETO; AND EFFORTS TOWARD NUCLEAR-FREE ZONES IN BALKANS AND AMONG "INDIAN OCEAN COUNTRIES" (AS PROPOSED BY ROMANIA AND PAKISTAN, RESPECTIVELY). PREDICTABLE POSITIONS TAKEN ON MIDDLE EAST, CYPRUS, DISARMAMENT, DECOLONIZATION, AND INDO-CHINA; NO MAJOR THIRD COUNTRIES WERE MENTIONED BY NAME OR EVEN BY INSINUATION. PAKISTANI EFFORT TO INTERPRET COMMUNIQUE'S NON-SPECIFIC ENDORSEMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS IN THAT REGARD AS "ROMANIA'S UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT TO THE KASHMIRIS' RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION" (GOP-CONTROLLED "MORNING NEWS") RECEIVED NO CORROBORATION FROM CEAUSESCU AT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KARACH 00672 160721Z

OFFICIAL DINNER AND FLAT PRIVATE DISAVOWAL FROM LOCAL ROMANIAN OFFICIAL.

3. IN FIRST TOAST AT OFFICIAL DINNER, BHUTTO, WHO SEEMED EXTREMELY TIRED AFTER HIS RECENT PUNJAB BARNSTORMING AND WHO READ HIS SPEECH IN A PERFUNCTORY MANNER, REITERATED PAKISTANI SIMLA AGREEMENT COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF KASHMIR DISPUTE BUT DESCRIBED "POLITICAL DEAL WITH INDIVIDUALS" THERE (READ GANDHI-

ABDULLAH SETTLEMENT) AND INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AS "SETBACKS". HE ALSO PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR UNCONDITIONAL TALKS WITH AFGHANISTAN DESPITE ITS "GRAVE PROVOCATIONS". HE THEN PRAISED BILATERAL CO-OPERATION, SIMILARITY OF TWO COUNTRIES' GOALS (IF NOT SOCIAL/ECONOMIC SYSTEMS), AND ROMANIAN LEADERSHIP. CEAUSESCU'S REPLY STRESSED PAKISTANI-ROMANIAN COOPERATION; IN SLIGHT VARIATION FROM COMMUNIQUE FORMULAS, HE EMPHASIZED ROMANIAN BACKING FOR SIHANOUK REGIME. THIS APPARENTLY PROMPTED BHUTTO TO RISE AGAIN TO SAY THAT RECENT EVENTS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA PROVED THAT NO POWER, NO THREAT OF "NUCLEAR EXTINCTION" OR "ANNIHILATION", COULD OBSTRUCT PEOPLE OF SOUTH EAST ASIA, WHOSE "VISION, COURAGE, AND DETERMINATION" HE SALUTED.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT TALK WITH CONGENOFF, ROMANIAN TRADE OFFICIAL SAID ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAD REACHED PLATEAU. NO NEW AGREEMENTS (E.G., ON ROMANIAN HELP FOR TAXILA HEAVY ELECTRICAL PROJECT, TRANSPORT SECTOR, OR OIL EXPLORATION) HAD BEEN REACHED, MAINLY BECAUSE OF PAKISTAN BUREAUCRATIC PROCRASTINATION. THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN PROGRAM OF ROMANIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN EXPANSION OF NATIONAL REFINERY, LTD. (NRL) BUCHAREST'S SOLE BUT IMPORTANT AID EFFORT HERE. ANNUAL VALUE OF BILATERAL BALANCED BARTER TRADE SEEMED UNLIKELY TO SURPASS PRESENT TWO MILLION DOLLAR LEVEL, SINCE PAKISTAN HAD ELIMINATED TWENTY PERCENT PRICE REBATE FOR BARTER EXPORTS, ROMANIA WAS RUNNING A LARGE TRADE SURPLUS BUT PAKISTAN HAD LITTLE NEW TO SELL, FREIGHT RATES WERE TOO HIGH, AND ROMANIA WAS MOVING TOWARD CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY TRADE.

5. COMMENT: THAT BHUTTO MADE A SPECIAL VISIT TO KARACHI TO SEE CEAUSESCU, WHO WAS ENROUTE FROM MANILA TO AMMAN, UNDERLINES THE VALUE BHUTTO ATTACHES TO MAINTAINING TIES WITH A COUNTRY WHICH, LIKE HIS OWN, IS SURROUNDED BY LARGER POWERS YET SEEKS AN ESSENTIALLY NON-ALIGNED, "THIRD-WORLD" ROLE AND FAIRLY CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. SINCE THEIR SIMILAR POLITICAL APPROACHES

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PAGE 04 KARACH 00672 160721Z

BRING THE TWO COUNTRIES TOGETHER WHILE GEOGRAPHY ALL BUT PRECLUDES REALLY SUBSTANTIVE BILATERAL RELATIONS (AND POSSIBLE DISAGREEMENTS), IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE COMMUNIQUE ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF THE POLITICAL TALKS. AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD WILL SEEK TO DEVELOP WHATEVER FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TALKS MIGHT PROVE REPORTWORTHY.

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